

# Media Richness, Pre-Purchase Mood, and Impulsive Buying

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of media richness on pre-purchase mood and its relationship with personality traits in impulsive buying. The data was collected through a questionnaire survey among consumers who have used Facebook's social commerce platform. The findings indicate that media richness directly affects perceived usefulness, generating positive pre-purchase mood that lead to impulsive buying. While media richness does not directly impact perceived enjoyment, it indirectly influences it through perceived usefulness, which stimulates positive pre-purchase emotions and prompts consumers to make impulsive buying. Additionally, extraversion and neuroticism play a role in emotional reactions and subsequent impulsive buying.

**KEYWORDS** - Social Commerce, Media richness, pre-purchase mood, big five, impulsive buying.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of social networking sites, social networking services, and Web 2.0 on Facebook has given rise to a novel type of electronic commerce known as Facebook commerce (f-commerce) (Leong et al., 2018). From a marketing perspective, e-commerce focuses on maximizing shopping efficiency by providing product catalogs, search functions, product recommendations, and one-click purchasing. On the other hand, f-commerce emphasizes direct social activities such as online collaboration and sharing, followed by online shopping (Al-Adwan & Kokash, 2019).

Facebook commissioned Kantar Profiles to conduct the "Global Industry Individual Transformation Tracking Study" from May to July 2020, observing Taiwanese consumers' online purchasing behavior in the post-pandemic era. The study revealed five major trends: Firstly, consumers prefer online shopping over physical shopping, with a broader range of product categories being purchased. Secondly, online channels are experiencing diverse development. Thirdly, consumers are placing increasing importance on the "shopping experience." Fourthly, immersive online shopping experiences are on the rise. Fifthly, the smoothness of the online consumer experience is a key factor in success (Facebook Business, 2020). Based on these five trends, besides the diversification of channel development, businesses must also pay special attention to consumers' online shopping experiences.

In recent research, Mahmood et al. (2019) highlighted personality traits as one of the important factors influencing impulse buying. Hence, this study will focus on the impact of consumer personality trait differences and media richness on impulse buying. Therefore, this study will examine the influence of pre-purchase emotions and personality traits on impulse buying in the context of social commerce from the perspective of media richness theory.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1 Social Commerce

In previous literature, Yadav's definition of social commerce involves using communication activities on social networks to influence the purchase decision process (pre-purchase, during purchase, post-purchase) (Yadav et al., 2013). Social commerce can be categorized into two main types: (1) social networking sites that include commercial functionalities enabling transactions and advertising, and (2) traditional e-commerce websites that incorporate social features to facilitate community interactions and experience sharing (Liang & Turban, 2011). With the maturity of Web 2.0 technologies and advances in information and communication technologies (ICT), it has attracted individuals online and facilitated interactions on online social platforms, thus emphasizing the importance of how businesses can encourage consumers to place orders on their websites through social platform interactions (Hu et al., 2019). Recent research also indicates that the study of social support and the structure of social commerce are important concepts for predicting consumer behavior (Hajli, 2015). With the rapid development of website functionality design, website quality plays a significant role in consumer satisfaction and future purchase intentions (Chi, 2018).

Hence, it can be inferred that social interactions and website functionality design are crucial factors influencing consumer purchasing behavior within the realm of social commerce. Thus, this study limits our discussion to social networking sites in order to emphasize the "social" nature of social commerce.

### 2. Media Richness Theory

The concept term of "Media Richness" was initially introduced by Daft and Lengel (1984), and later the "Media Richness Theory" (MRT). MRT was initially designed to improve the operational efficiency of organizations by reducing information asymmetry. It is asserted that different media choices are made based on the content and communication objectives. When faced with a high degree of ambiguity and uncertainty, there is a tendency to choose media that are richer and more detailed. Daft et al. (1987) introduced four assessment dimensions to measure media richness: feedback, multiple cues, language variety and personal focus.

A study on social reviews indicates that factors such as technology acceptance and media richness influence shoppers' acceptance of reviews, which in turn impacts their purchase intent (Diwanji & Cortese, 2021). Therefore, this study will use immediate feedback, multiple cues, language variety, and personal focus as criteria to measure the media richness of social commerce websites.

### **3. Big Five personality traits**

The Five Factor Model (FFM) is considered the cornerstone of personality trait theory (McCrae & Costa, 1990). Mahmood et al., (2019) showed that personality traits play an important role in impulse buying behavior. Fenton-O’Creevy and Furnham (2020) found that individuals high in neuroticism and extraversion, and low in conscientiousness, are more likely to engage in impulsive buying.

The FFM encompasses the five dimensions of personality traits (McCrae & Costa, 1990): extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience.

### **4. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)**

TAM is constructed on the Theory of Rational Action (TRA) proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), and is commonly used to explore users’ acceptance and behavioral intentions towards newly introduced systems (Davis, 1985). Davis (1989) extended the model, with scholars suggesting that behavioral intentions may be directly influenced by perceived usefulness and attitudes toward use. It is also believed that perceptual usefulness can directly influence behavioral intentions. In this study, we investigate the influence of pre-purchase emotions and personality traits on impulse buying in social commerce. We utilize the factors from Media Richness Theory as external variables, expressing cognitive factors through perceived usefulness, thereby impacting consumers’ pre-purchase emotions.

### **5. Pre-purchase Mood and Impulse Buying**

In their study on impulse buying, Ozer and Gultekin (2015) introduced the concept of pre-purchase mood to explore its impact on impulsive buying behavior. In the context of impulse buying research, positive emotions are more likely to trigger impulse buying than negative emotions (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Ho & Lim, 2018). Parsad et al. (2021) demonstrated the substantive impact of emotions on consumers’ impulsive buying tendencies within a promotional context, emphasizing the importance of emotions in influencing impulsive buying.

## **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHOD**

Through an extensive literature search, this study aims to address the following two questions: (1) How does the media richness of social commerce websites influence consumer impulse buying? (2) How do consumer personality traits influence impulse buying?

### **Method**

The study will use a structured approach to design the questionnaire and collect the sample data using an on-line survey method using a seven-point Likert scale. To ensure the quality of the questionnaire, 30 Master’s students were allowed to participate in the paper-based questionnaire. Based on their feedback adjustments were made to optimize the clarity and applicability of the questionnaire. Then for pre-testing, out of 56 responses collected, 44 valid responses were used to verify the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, laying the foundation for the final version.

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Impact of Media Richness on Impulse Buying Behavior in Facebook Community Commerce

This study examines the influence of media richness on consumers' impulsive buying behavior in the context of Facebook community commerce. The findings of this study indicate that media richness in Facebook community commerce positively affects consumers' perceived usefulness. This finding supports the theory of Friedrich et al. (2019) that perceived usefulness is a cognitive factor for evaluating media richness.

Basuki et al. (2022) suggest that when a platform holds practical value for users' needs and goals, it is more likely to generate positive perceived enjoyment. The study's results support this notion by demonstrating that perceived usefulness positively influences perceived enjoyment. Thus, the study suggests that enhancing consumers' perceived usefulness of the Facebook community commerce platform can encourage more active user participation and further enhance the level of perceived enjoyment. The study supports the arguments of Juntongjin (2022) and Liao et al. (2020), which found that consumers' perceived usefulness positively affects pre-purchase emotions. The study suggests that when consumers browse diverse content, engage in community interactions, and enjoy shopping experiences on the platform, they experience positive emotions and pleasure, which lead to positive pre-purchase emotions. Positive pre-purchase emotions are shown to positively impact impulse buying, consistent with the viewpoints of Ho and Lim (2018) and Martaleni et al. (2022). The study emphasizes that such impulsive buying behavior may be driven by the influence of pre-purchase emotions rather than rational considerations.

In summary, the level of media richness on the Facebook community commerce platform directly influences consumers' pre-purchase emotions through perceived usefulness, making them perceive the platform as practical and generating positive pre-purchase emotions.

### 2. Exploring How Consumer Personality Traits Impact Impulse Buying Behavior

The results of this study reveal that among the five major personality traits, extraversion and neuroticism have a positive impact on impulse buying behavior, while agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience show no significant relationship. This study suggests that extraverted consumers may be more inclined to show interest in various products or promotional activities on social commerce platforms.

Neuroticism's impact on impulse buying behavior supports the viewpoint from Turkyilmaz et al. (2015). The study suggests that neurotic consumers might be more responsive to emotionally stimulating content on social commerce platforms, and are more likely to make purchase decisions based on their current emotions and impulses. However, agreeableness does not exhibit a significant influence on impulse buying behavior in this study, consistent with Sun et al. (2004) and Leong et al. (2017).

The results show that openness to experience does not significantly affect impulse buying behavior, in line with Sun et al. (2004) and Olsen et al. (2016). This study suggests that open-minded consumers may be more inclined

to explore new business opportunities and products, focusing on evaluating and comparing different options rather than engaging in impulsive buying behavior.

The results reveal that extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience have a positive impact, while agreeableness shows no significant relationship, and conscientiousness negatively impacts impulse buying behavior through perceived enjoyment. The study suggests that agreeable individuals may focus less on their own perceived enjoyment and more on others' satisfaction to maintain harmonious relationships.

## 5. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Firstly, the analysis results of this study may suffer from a lack of sample representativeness and may not fully represent all consumers who have shopped on Facebook. Secondly, because the research findings sample is too concentrated, this may result in an incomplete representation of the entire consumer population. Thirdly, the study heavily depends on data from participant's self-report responses, which were translated from foreign English literature. Despite careful design, subjective interpretations, misunderstandings, and respondents' opinions could introduce inaccuracies and bias, limiting the reliability of the findings. Finally, following the sample analysis, it was discovered that the questionnaire content of this study overlooked investigating the most frequently used purchasing functions on Facebook by surveyed participants.

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